

# DERMOT M<sup>C</sup>MURROUGH

A Drama.

(TIME, A. D. 800.)



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## PERSONS REPRESENTED :

DERMOT McMURROUGH.—King of Ireland.

BRIAN.—Brother of the King.

ARMAGH.—Chief Man-at-Arms.

HUGH.—A Trusty Servant.

BALLYNOOK.—Chief of Outlaws.

STEPHEN.—Son of Ballynook.

NORA.—Daughter of Ballynook.

DENNIS.—Chief Forester.

REDBEARD.—An Outlaw.

OLD MAN.—A Priest.

M McNAGNISH and FITZWILLIAM.—King's Officers.

TEAGUE of LEATH.—A Chief.

FAHERTY.—A Boatman.

*Robbers, Soldiers, &c.*

ETHELRED.—King of Britain.

EDGAR.—Brother of the King.

ESTELLA.—Sister of the King.

ANDELWALD.—A Courtier.

HARPER.—A Cambrian.

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# DERMOT MCMURROUGH.

A Drama.

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## PART FIRST.

SCENE 1ST.—[*Dermot McMurrough, the King of Ireland, discovered in his great audience hall, Courtiers, Soldiers and others surrounding him. Time, A. D. 800.*]

MCMURROUGH.—Ho, there, bloody villains! where is Armagh, my trusty man-at-arms, my worthy Captain. Speak, or by the powers of the air I'll hang the last villain of ye.

DENNIS [*The Chief Forrester coming forward*].—Your Majesty we know not. Behold we are inferior officers to the mighty Armagh, and we can control not his coming or going for he goeth where it pleaseth him, and no man can bid him save yourself, the mighty ruler of Ireland.

KING.—Dennis, were it not for thy usefulness I would cause a merry-making for the rabble to-morrow, by having thee hanged for thy presumption. However, I must e'en disappoint the people, and do myself an injustice by allowing thee to live on a little space. But hear me Dennis, and ye all, ye grinning rabble, unless tidings are brought me of the whereabouts of Armagh by night fall, it were better that ye hang yourselves in a bunch with your bow strings. Depart from me. [*They all go out leaving MCMURROUGH alone.*]

KING [*Solus*].—There they go, as worthless a lot of grinning vagabonds as ever King was cursed with. Ah! that I had a thousand men, like the valiant Armagh. Then would I gladly join issue with the proud Briton beyond the sea. But there is not the likes of Armagh within the bounds of the world, mighty in stature, noble and brave in mind, he is alone in his excellence, I would he were here. Hist, what is that!

[*A bugle sounds. Enter ARMAGH.*]

By the spade of Philla McCool. There he comes.

KING.—Ah, ye rogue, sure, ye have murdered me with watching for ye to come, where hast thou been, good Armagh?

ARMAGH.—Good sovereign, I have but been to my cottage beyond the heath, where thou knowest I grow the provender to keep this life in me. Did I not tell thee? then do I ask thy forgiveness.

KING.—Nonsense, 'tis a matter of no moment. But I have longed to talk with thee, away from this stupid rabble, whose best purpose would be to hang from time to time to amuse my loyal subjects. And whilst I speak of it, Armagh, do thou at thy convenience seek me stout any serviceable men, men of likely appearance, to stand in my house, and turn these gaping heathens adrift, sure, I am ashamed that visitors to my dominions should see them stalking around like ghosts of worn-out beggars. Better that they till the soil, and each one produce his measure of oatmeal and peas.

ARMAGH.—Thou hast well said, good sovereign, they are truly an unlikely lot, yet within each rough and homely breast beats a true heart for thee and Old Ireland.

KING.—Armagh, I ask thy pardon. Thou art right. The men are true and valiant and their shabbiess of manner is more my sin than theirs. I would not part with one of them for half the army of the Northmen. Nay, Armagh, dismiss not one of them but rather do thou order from my weavers good strong cloth and the best and warmest of sheep skins, and let them be properly clad and armed. Well, this is matter of very light import. Hast thou heard of the movements of the Saxon King, the fair haired boy of Britain? Odds Kings! but I am minded to dismiss my soldiers, throw my spear and bow into the bog, and go tend sheep with the women, when I think of such as he being King. Bad luck to me were there none other such, would I have the royal sport driving them into the sea with an old hag's besom.

ARMAGH.—Worthy Sovereign, Ethelred is indeed but a fair-haired lad, with a soft hand to woo blushing maidens withal, yet thou knowest that many a strong and valiant arm would be lifted for him, and many a stout heart's best blood would be poured out ere harm came to him. Whoso meeteth the Saxon

army hath need of strong bows and heavy axes, and many a good brawny arm to wield them. Yea, Dermot McMurrough, thou knowest that no one can stand before them, since the stout Dane hath thrice been driven back from the shores of Albion.

KING.—Armagh, thou speakest the born Briton. Sure but I have been mistaken all this time, and thou art one of the mighty Ethelred's born subjects. Och, but mayhaps I am speaking to the ambassador of Briton's King.

ARMAGH.—O King, thou hast a sovereign right to speak as thou seemest best to thy thanes. Laugh at me as thou wilt. Yet when Old Ireland or Dermot McMurrough has need of the heart's blood of Armagh, then will it flow as freely as water down a hill. Yea, though I love Britain, yet would I help carry fire and sword throughout her borders before harm should come to thee, or aught but peace and happiness should come to thy kingdom.

KING.—Armagh, thou art always right. Peace, I did but jest with thee. Sure but I know that a truer heart than thine does not beat. Thou hast my love and confidence. Thou truly art a born Briton, but thou art by instinct and nativity one of my truest subjects. Let us speak now more seriously. Thou didst speak to me of the lovely sister of the Briton King. I have long been pondering of thy words concerning her, until my sleep is disturbed by visions of her golden hair, flowing over the arched marble of her shoulders. Armagh, she is a being of more than earthly beauty. Of that I am convinced. Now, what I would speak to thee is this: I am enamoured of this Saxon Princess, and I command thee to go forth and seek her hand in marriage for me. Thou hast lately been to the Saxon Court. Thou knowest the speech and customs of that people. Thou canst command in my name the boatmen trading to those shores, or anything in my kingdom necessary to perform thy mission. Make ready and go without delay. [*KING arises and goes out.*]

ARMAGH.—Alas, my master thinketh not that he is a wild barbarian, and his kingdom well-nigh a wilderness. What would the gentle Estella think to see him and his palace? It was a luckless day that I ever spake to him of her. What shall I do? I must e'en obey him. Though gentle and kind as he

now is to me, he can be the wild murdering savage if I refuse to obey him. Not that I fear him. Far from it. And when I return with her refusal, which I do not for an instant doubt she will give, who can curb his anger? Well, so may it be. I will return to Ethelred's Court, and e'en attempt this wooing; but methinks the King of Britain will at least take my life for such presumption. [*He goes out.*]

SCENE 2ND.—[*In the forest, near Dublin.* BALLYNOOK, the outlaw, with REDBEARD, STEPHEN and DENNIS, the King's Forester.

BALLYNOOK.—What said'st thou, good Dennis? Did the King command Armagh to go and woo the Saxon Princess for him?

DENNIS.—He did. I heard it myself from behind the area.

BALLYNOOK.—Ha! ha! As well mightest thou mate the roaring bull with the gentle fawn of the forest. Dost McMurrough think that the lady would permit him to groom her horses? Were I not so deeply engaged in our most honourable business of relieving the overburdened wealth of the road, I would e'en advance Armagh, and woo the lass with better success myself.

REDBEARD.—A murrain take thee and all the Saxon women, and men and children, for that matter. Yea, and evil fall on these peaceful marrying times, when an honest man hath not chance for a livelihood, except a beggarly penny from some wandering miser. Nay, give me war, and plenty of it—blood too, I say; then will the Flemish gold jingle in our hands, instead of this rusty copper. A shrewd and cutting life for me.

DENNIS.—A shrewd life it would be for thee, and a short one, if Dermot McMurrough's men would overtake thee.

REDBEARD [*drawing his sword*].—Villain! what am I but what thou art; what art thou that I am not? A vile traitor, who eats bread of the man whom he deceives. A skulking robber, who hath not the grace to cleave to the forest, but seemeth to be an honest man. Ye murdering vagabond, draw!

[DENNIS *draws his sword*. BALLYNOOK *rushes between them*.]

BALLYNOOK.—Peace, lads. Save thy swords for common foes. There will be occasion for their use, when Dennis and Redbeard can fight side by side. Ye are both in the same peril, and in the same business. Dennis, thou art useful to us,



being in the King's household ; and thou, my valiant Redbeard, thou art to me as the staff to declining age, or the harp to the ancient minstrel. Put away thy swords and let them not be drawn, save on occasion of common peril. He did but speak in jesting mood. Henceforth, Dennis, curb thy sharpened tongue ; and thou, Redbeard, hold thy fiery temper, that like an unmanageable horse, breaks away from thee. We know our common peril. Small luck would it be to any of us for the henchman of McMurrrough to lay hands upon us. Redbeard, wilt thou depart to our place of meeting, and bid our men be wakeful and sleep as doth the hare when the crafty fox lieth upon her trail. Sharp work is ahead, and strong, active arms are needed. Bid all be ready ere the bannock cock croweth. Go in haste and peace, good Redbeard ; and thou, gentle Stephen, bear him company. [*They go out.*]

DENNIS.—I thought to be devoured entirely.

BALLYNOOK.—I tell thee, Dennis, it is well that thy head is not broken, asking pardon of thy valour. A gentler man than Redbeard might have cracked thy skull. What a passion thou kindest in him ! But he is no secret enemy. Steenie maketh a good foil for Redbeard. He can vent his spleen upon him freely, and it hath no more effect than wine upon a post.

DENNIS.—Well, I fear him not, nor any such blusterer. But how cometh that mewling idiot in the ranks ? I often thought to ask thee.

BALLYNOOK.—Dennis, thou knowest not how thou speakest, or I would smite thee for it. Be more guarded in thy speech, or I will not answer for thy safety. Seek not to know what concerns thee not. Stephen may have a weak mind, but he knoweth better when and how to speak than many who claim greater wit. He is faithful and trustworthy, let that be sufficient for thee. And now, thou sayest that Armagh goeth to Britain with presents and offerings for the Princess. Small good may they do her. Were it any other man in Ireland who bore them than Armagh, they would go to enrich our merry band. Surely I fear not but we could take them, but a more valiant hearted man ne'er trod brake or glen than Armagh. Many of our good men would go down, before the treasure would be ours, and then we would be compelled to

slay him before we could lay hands upon them. And I tell thee, Dennis, our country can ill spare such as Armagh. I freely tell thee, I love plunder, and our free greenwood life, yet I love old Erin much more. In Armagh I see the hope of our benighted and darkened land. I tell thee further, that it is much less to be a robber here where all are robbers, than in more favoured lands. Was I not driven from my home and kindred by the oppressions of that brutal savage, Dermot McMurrough. Bad luck to his black visage. It would better ornament the top of a robber's post, than any of ours. I would that Armagh were now King, then would there be no more loyal or honest man between the two seas, than Ballynook. But, good Dennis, knowest thou not of some fairer plunder than the presents that Armagh beareth to the Princess?

DENNIS.—Nay; what better plunder want'st thou than that? Sure, all the best jewels and gold and the likes, goeth with Armagh.

BALLYNOOK—By the holy cudgel, I will not harm a penny that Armagh guardeth, and woe be it to any of Ballynook's men who trieth it.

DENNIS—So let it be, I but did my duty to thee, and that at the risk of my own life. I will make what shift possible back to the castle. Fair and hearty, good captain. [*He goes.*]

BALLYNOOK—There he goes, to smile and fawn upon the man he is betraying. But who knoweth that the villain will not betray me. Dost not the fox carry provender back and forth? I will e'en set a strict watch upon him, and at the first sign of treachery he will walk the dark bog of Kilkleuch. The fiends fly off with the smooth face upon him. The best luck I wish him is to have the gentle McMurrough get his anger kindled against him. But I must away to the robbers' tryst.

[*He goes.*]

SCENE 3RD—*In the robbers' glen, deep in the forest. Time, night.*  
BALLYNOOK, REDBEARD, STEPHEN, CRASSIE, and other Robbers around, all armed with the weapons of the time. BALLYNOOK arrayed in garments made of wolf skins, his head ornamented with a cap made of the skin of the wolf's head.

BALLYNOOK—How sayest thou, lads, hath yet the wild wolf bayed?



STEPHEN (*singing*)—

The wild wolf bays, the forest rings,  
The owl's abroad, the night-bird sings,  
The traveller hastes him on the road,  
Come, come, my lads, we must abroad.

[*All join in chorus.*]

Ho, Ho, the robber O,  
A merry life for me,  
While others love the bounding wave,  
Give us the forest free.

[*Chorus repeated.*]

BALLYNOOK—My trusty men, ye know how that Armagh goeth to Britain, with treasure of the King's house. No one doubteth that we could fetch it away, yet not a hair of Armagh's head shall fall by any act of Ballynook's men. I shall cause anyone who disobeys this command to be slain, and his head placed upon a pole in this forest. Do ye all hear that?

REDBEARD—How now. Why hath the valiant captain come to so tame a conclusion? Methinks he cannot fear even so valiant a man as Armagh.

BALLYNOOK—Hold thy peace. Thou full well knowest that I fear not any man. Thou likewise remembereth that our country hath no more faithful son than Armagh. Did not we fight beside him on the Black Moor. Shame on thee, Redbeard.

REDBEARD—Thou art right. I will not molest Armagh, and death to him that doth. But, hist! Here cometh the short-eared wolf, the crafty fox. [Enter DENNIS.]

BALLYNOOK—Welcome Dennis. Thou'rt late, but still seasonable. What tidings bringest thou, my merry son of war.

DENNIS—Sure, but I got away just in time, Armagh goeth to the sea-coast but to-morrow, with the king's jewels that ye mind were taken at the fight with the Flemish at the Black Moor. In troth, better salvage hath never fallen into thy hands, for he is attended by a beggar's crew who will flee like hares at the first jingle of our swords, and what is one man's valour against forty, even if he be the great and valiant Armagh.

BALLYNOOK—I told thee, Dennis, that no harm should come to Armagh nor the treasure that he guardeth. Sure, if he wanted escort and protection, my trusty lads would give it him. What say you?

ALL.—We would, noble Ballynook.

DENNIS.—Then if thou fearest the great Armagh, and thy band of honest gentlemen are over scrupulous about taking the treasure, I must e'en seek worse company.

REDBEARD.—When thou sayest that we fear aught, villain, thou liest ! [DENNIS *flings a javelin at REDBEARD, which misses him and strikes STEPHEN, mortally wounding him, DENNIS escapes in the darkness.* BALLYNOOK *rushes to the lad and raises him, makes lamentations.*]

BALLYNOOK.—O the villain ! He has slain my own son. O my boy ! Speak to your father. Men, pursue the bloody murderer. Let him not escape the forest. My poor bairn, can'st thou not look at thy father ?

STEPHEN [*feebly*].—Ah, the mist and fog that hath settled into the forest. Sure, but I can't see a hand's breadth. It is cold, too, and there is no coat upon me to keep me warm. Father, father, where art thou ?

BALLYNOOK.—Here, here, my lad, I am beside thee. See'st thou me ?

STEPHEN.—Alas ! All are gone and I am alone. The forest is dark and cold and I perish. Ah ! It is lighter, the mist and fog is rising, and I begin to see light among the trees, I am warmer too. See how beautiful the light. O the beautiful music. It is light and warm now. [*He dies.*] [BALLYNOOK *makes great lamentation while all leave in search of DENNIS, save REDBEARD and CRASSIE.*]

REDBEARD.—Good Crassie, this night must that traitorous wretch be taken before he reaches the King's castle. He will betray the matter to the King and to Armagh. McMurrough hath large force wherewith to scour the forest, and drive us to the sea. Thou art fleet of foot, Crassie. Thou knowest the road he will take to return, go thou quickly through to the four oaks by the King's highway, and smite him dead, and I will give thee the jewel-hilted dagger I had from the King of Ireland. Go quickly. [*Crassie goes.*]

REDBEARD [*to BALLYNOOK*].—Master. It was my rashness that caused the lad's death. Smite me and let me die.

BALLYNOOK.—Nay. Nay, my trusty friend. Trouble not thy mind, but rather go thou and secure the cowardly murderer.

REDBEARD.—Rather permit me to wait with thee, for this chase is now far from here, and all our good men pursue him.

BALLYNOOK.—Good friend, at this sore time, it doeth me great good to have thy presence. O, my poor harmless boy. O, Steenie, my bairn. [*He weeps.* REDBEARD wraps a mantle over the body.]

SCENE 4TH.—[*In the King's council room, a rude interior, ornamented with old weapons, armour, antlers, fitches of bacon, sausages, &c.* KING and ARMAGH.]

McMURROUGH.—Now, my noble Armagh, what thinkest thou of thy mission. The lady will be highly pleased, sure, to have the chance of getting so fine a looking husband as myself. Besides, am I not the ruler of the largest part of this delightful kingdom, and have I not conquered all of these petty chiefs, barring the Chief Teague of Leath, bad sight to his bloody eyes, but I'll have him after ye return. The princess will require but short time to make up her mind. Ah! Armagh, but it's the fine feast we will have when ye return. Sure, but I will wish I had such a forester as Ballynook again, may the dragons crawl off with him, then would I have such dainty meats of the forest as we scarce see in these times. But now the rascally outlaws eat the best, and my hunters get only the old and crippled deer. Ah! But here comes Dennis. Speak knave, why comest thou in without giving warning? [*Enter DENNIS, out of breath running.* DENNIS attempts to speak.]

KING.—Ah, ye rogue, but I will e'en shake ye more than that if thou stand gaping at me like a sick cat. Speak out man, what aileth thee?

DENNIS [*with difficulty*].—Sure, as I was coming through the forest to-night I saw a great light, and going there to find what was the matter, your majesty, I found it was the grand meeting place of the outlaws, and they set upon me, and I slew one with my spear, when I ran away from them, and outran them until I came to the four oaks by the highway, when a murdering thief who was behind cast a spear at me, and had I not happened to stumble, sure he would have killed me entirely, as it was, he has cut me in the back, you can see.

KING.—So he did, and bad luck to him for his poor aim. Go thy ways, Dennis, and let the priest of the oak leech thy back. [*Dennis goes out.*] Armagh, we must to-night go

forth with trusty men and scour the forest. These villains must be captured at any risk. By the holy giant but it will be a grand frolic to hang the lot of them on my wedding day. Sure, but I think that Ballynook is at the head of the gang. But I long to lay my hands upon him.

ARMAGH.—It is a great pity that so brave a man should be in such company. Knowest thou not that at the battle of the Black Moor, none fought so valiantly, and none with such effect as Ballynook.

KING.—So the wild boar of the forest is brave, and the wolf fighteth for her den, but we slay them, likewise, when we have opportunity. How many men can we bring together?

ARMAGH.—Above forty, by midnight, your Majesty.

KING.—Then will I seek my couch, and do thou make ready, take the men, with Dennis to show the way.

ARMAGH.—But suppose there is danger to Dennis to take him out with such a wound?

KING.—Fear not. He has been born for a merrier death than that. Yea, and a drier one. I shall hang the villain with the rest, for I am of the opinion that he belongeth to the band, and hath had some quarrel with them, and in revenge hath reported this story. Make ready, good Armagh, and lose no time. I would go forth myself, when all is ready. [*They go out. Dennis appears from behind. He shows the greatest terror.*]

DENNIS [*speaking to himself.*].—Ah, the King knoweth my secret. Where shall I hide my guilty head? I cannot go back to the outlaws, and I cannot escape to Teague by reason of my wound. I will e'en go forth, and show Armagh the place, and haply I may get favour with McMurrrough. I will e'en live an honest life, if I can but escape this great danger. An honest, truer-hearted man shall not be found in all Ireland, if I but save myself from this pine. Oh, that I had but remained in my cottage, and not sought honour from the King. Ha, there comes the Captain, [*He sneaks out. ARMAGH enters, speaking to himself.*]

ARMAGH.—So the King himself is minded to go out with the men. Oh! that I could turn him from this foolish purpose of wooing the Saxon maiden. It will come to naught, and he will blame me for the failure. Perhaps if we can get employment

for his savage mind hunting the outlaws, he will forget it. But I shall be much grieved to see harm come to Ballynook, for a truer friend to his distracted country does not tread her soil. And I remember Redbeard quite well. Though he is rash and violent in his temper, yet his heart is in his hand for all good deeds to Erin. She needs such men. Even if they are outlaws, they were made so by the oppressions of McMurrough. Oh! that the day would come when all over the country would be prosperity, and peace, like the gentle sunshine, glow all over the green hills of Old Ireland. Fain would I lay down my life to bring quiet and peace to my country. And when the light of day should grow dim to my eyes, may I, the last sight I see, be the day star of brightness shining all over her borders. [*Noise outside. Enter HUGH, a good-natured attendant upon the King.*]

HUGH.—Ah, mighty Captain, a good night to your honour. Sure, but it is sorry the taste of sleep have I got the night, barring three or four hours. All for watching to speak with you concerning what the King wishes me to tell ye.

ARMAGH.—Well, honest Hugh, speak on, I am minding ye.

HUGH.—Well then, he said but just now, for I have been counting it on my fingers, so as not to forget, that ye shall take above forty good men. Do ye mind, Captain.

ARMAGH.—Yes, yes, go on.

HUGH.—Yes. He said you should take the men, and go out with Dennis, and capture the bloody thief that killed Dennis entirely. No, he said take Dennis, and lave the men, or lave Dennis, or wait until he comes out, and by the powers of darkness, but I don't mind which. Sure, but I have it now. He said for ye to take Dennis and wait with the men until he came out, for he can't sleep, for thinking of the jolly fight with the thieves.

ARMAGH.—I think, Hugh, that the loss of sleep hath upset thy mind. Better ye go and secure a little sleep, so ye can be in with the fight.

HUGH.—Troth, noble captain, but it is me mother's son that can't sleep while there is a prospect for a fight. Sure, but it is hard knocks I can be giving to the murdering outlaws. Let them come on me. Two or twenty, it is all one to Hugh.

(*He sings*):

Ah, give me a stick for every knave,  
And here's my hand to Paddie's brave,  
For jolly the fight we have to save  
Ould Erin from her foemen.

For heads must crack, and blood shall spill,  
Ere yet we right the many ills,  
And clear Ould Erin from foemen.

Whoop! Hurrah!

ARMAGH.—Good Hugh, thy song is better, if possible, than thyself. But, do ye mind, that among these same outlaws is many a good friend to thy country. Sure, ye haven't forgotten who won the day down by Ballycleaugh. Now, Hugh, would ye be striking and killing so good a friend to Erin. Speak, man.

HUGH.—Sure, may the foul fiend fly off with me if I do. Wasn't it myself that stood beside him, when his good sword cut down through the armour of the Chief of Connaught, and sliced him like your honour would a leek. Then what a whoop he set up, that the whole force of vagabonds that followed him fled, as if all the demons of darkness were upon them. Ballynook was the great man that day, and no one could stand before him. Sure, but it is myself that thinks that he was ill-treated.

ARMAGH.—Stop, stop, foolish fellow, dost mind who might hear thee? Dost thy head sit so solid on thy shoulders that the broadsword cannot cut it off. If ye want to help right the ills of old Erin, that ye sing about, ye must e'en want to live, for dead men do no fighting.

HUGH.—Ah, it is myself that wants to live anyhow, whether old Erin is righted or not.

ARMAGH.—Well, then, ye must keep a still tongue in that head of yours, if ye want it to sit nicely on your shoulders.

HUGH.—In faith, but I can keep as still as the first wake of McCool, the Irish Giant, where there was none to sit with the body but himself. Sure, but it is a long time they will wait for a wake if Hugh is to be the subject, and he brings the hanging on himself by talking. Bad luck to me, but who comes outside.

[*Enter MCMURROUGH.*]

MCMURROUGH [*to HUGH*].—O, ye beastly bog-begotten villain, why did you not send me the Captain as I bid ye. Sure, but when I find time, I will hang ye for a common vagabond.



HUGH.—Great King, then may the saints keep ye busy for many a long year. May the snakes crawl off with me, but I was just telling the Captain how ye told me to tell him.

ARMAGH.—The fellow is not blameworthy, your majesty, as I was hearing his message when ye entered.

McMURROUGH.—Off with ye, then, lest a worse fate befall ye. Go to bed, and sleep, and see if ye can obey me now.

HUGH.—Sure, but it is many a harder task I have had. But little fear that I will disobey this time. [*He goes.*]

McMURROUGH.—Armagh, what is the time of night?

ARMAGH.—It is now about the turn of midnight, for I hear e'en now the cocks crowing. [*Crowing outside.*]

McMURROUGH.—This night I hope to be revenged on my direst enemy. Ah, Ballynook! I have thee by the throat. I tell thee, good Armagh, that there is not a pleasure in my life but is bittered by the thought that that villain still lives. And there is not a wish of my heart but would I throw away to have his heart's blood. Many is the curse I have heaped upon his head, and now I see the opportunity to tear him limb from limb. Sure, ye must not kill him outright even if ye have the chance, for I want the pleasure of tearing the eyes from his head while he yet lives. Armagh, get the men, and take that villain Dennis, and if he show us not the outlaws' camp, then will I treat him as I would the chief outlaw. Come, let us go. [*They go out.*]

SCENE 5TH.—[*In the Forest, at the trysting-place of the Outlaws. BALLYNOOK and REDBEARD sitting beside the body of STEPHEN. The body wrapped in a mantle, BALLYNOOK and REDBEARD moaning. Enter NORAH, the daughter of BALLYNOOK, and sister of STEPHEN, a vision of perfect female loveliness. She throws herself weeping on the ground by the body. Time, night. BALLYNOOK speaks.*]

BALLYNOOK.—Good Redbeard. It is better that we have the body borne to the cottage beyond the burn, where once the dame resided. It is not meet that the lass be here in the forest, amid the damps of the night. Do thou go, then, to where the men are secreted, and fetch four trusty friends to make a bier of boughs, and bear my son to the cottage. Haste thee, good Redbeard, for it cometh on toward the midnight. [*REDBEARD makes ready and goes forth.*]

NORAH.—O, woe is me. O, my brother, the companion of my youthful sports. So gentle, so kind, yet as brave as a warrior. O, how can I go on and live and thou dead. The spring shall come, then the summer, and the winter, and the years shall come and go, but thou, my brother, shall come among us no more. O, woe is me! O, my brother!

BALLYNOOK.—Oh! my boy. Thou wast the light of my life, the hope of my declining years, but my light has gone out in darkness and my hope is like the straw that has been cast into the oven. Oh, my son; that thou shouldst fall by the hand of a cowardly traitor, in the fulness of health and manhood. Oh, my poor bairn. [*He weeps. Noise of tramping of many feet. Rude orders given in the voice of MCMURROUGH. Enter MCMURROUGH, ARMAGH, DENNIS and men. Man with a torch comes forward. MCMURROUGH advances. He speaks.*]

MCMURROUGH.—Ha! thou thrice accursed wretch. Thou robber and murderer. Thou fiend of darkness. Thou curse of thy country. Now at last I have thee. O, but I will flay thee alive. I will pull thee limb from limb. Here, now, thou viper, and this thy demon's imp. Now will I have thy heart's blood. [*NORAH screams and throws herself on her father's neck. BALLYNOOK speaks.*]

BALLYNOOK [*to McM.*].—McMurrough, thou surely hast yet some heart of humanity in thee. Here lieth the dead body of my only son, and here is my defenceless daughter. Let me bury my son, even here with the help of thy men, and send my daughter away. They cannot harm thee. After that thou canst do with me as thou wilt.

MCMURROUGH.—Wretch, thou shalt die by inches, and this female whelp of thine shall see it, after which she shall be given to my soldiers. This vile carcass can be buried by the wild wolf. Ha! men; seize him. Armagh, take him. Villains, bind him. Let me tear out his eyes. Armagh, I command thee to seize him.

ARMAGH.—Never, while a drop of true Irish blood runs in my veins will I not touch a faithful son of old Ireland, nor shalt thou harm him while a breath remains in Armagh's body. [*KING grows furious; draws his sword; rushes at BALLYNOOK. ARMAGH with one blow of his cudgel knocks him senseless. RED-BEARD with attendants come up. Soldiers seeing the KING fall by*

ARMAGH'S hand, scatter and retreat towards the castle taking the insensible KING with them. NORAH clings to her father. REDBEARD draws sword and makes toward ARMAGH.]

BALLYNOOK.—Hold, good Redbeard. Noble Armagh, I thank thee to-night. Not that thou hast saved my life, for that is not worth the saving, but that thou hast raised thy hand in behalf of my defenceless child, and hast made it possible to give my dead bairn a human burial. Good Armagh, may heaven reward thee. I never can.

ARMAGH.—Ballynook, may the sun be forever dark to me, and may the blood dry in my veins, if I ever stand by and see a noble soul like thine tormented, or a fair lady like thy daughter suffer harm. No, no. Armagh wars not against grief-stricken hearts, nor defenceless women. Ballynook, let me mingle my tears with thine over the body of thy slain child, after which I will assist at the burial. For the present, I think it better that we remove the body of your son, and the young lady, to a place of greater safety. We well know the temper and the courage of McMurrough. He will be back by morning light, and I am with thee and thine, an outlaw to him. Let us not tempt his vengeance.

REDBEARD.—Noble sir, permit me to take thy hand. It is many a day since we met, and may it be a long day ere we part. See around thee thy slaves, thy born servants, who will spill the last drop of their blood in thy behalf, and in the behalf of our groaning country.

ARMAGH.—Good friend Redbeard, I am at the present time an outcast from my home and country. Alas, Armagh has no cause. But we must not idly talk here. Take thy men and remove the body of poor Steenie to a place of safety, and beg thy master to seek some sleep, for the night is far spent. So long as the lady and the grief-stricken father are in want of escort, just so long will I remain with thee. Henceforth my ways are beyond the borders of my country.

[Men raise the body of STEPHEN. NORAH leans on the arm of her father, and all depart.]

## PART SECOND.

SCENE 1ST.—[*In the King's house. Time near morning. HUGH alone walking the floor. He is displaying fear. Talks to himself.*]

HUGH.—O ! but it is a sorry day that I left the bogs and came to be a King's man. Sure it is the perfect gentleman I could have been, with my neat little cottage and my turf spade, and no trouble at all only to do me day's work and go home at night to me porridge and to me bed. Whisht, what is that.

[*Cock crows outside.*] Bad luck to the throat of ye, for starting the life out of an honest man. But I wish it was morning, or else the King and the King's men would return. Sure every noise freezes the blood of me. Ha ! [*He looks around in terror.*] May the fiends fly off with the mice. I thought sure some one was coming. I feel to-night that there is great trouble and much blood being spilt. Sure when the King heard that Ballynook was to be captured, he looked like the wild beast when it is turned at bay in the forest. Sure but there is many good men and true behind Ballynook, and won't stand by and see him murdered. Oh it is no relish I have for fight, except it be a good natural bout with a bit of a blackthorn stick with a bosom friend. Stop now. What is that ? Some one comes. O by the holy hill of Howth. O saints of my grandfather defend me. O blood and murder. [*He falls on his knees in great terror, at the sight of the apparition that enters the door. Enter an old man with a long white beard, a white skull-cap on his head, and clad in a long black robe quite different from the half savage dress of the people. He speaks.*]

OLD MAN.—Son, why art thou overcome with fear ? I am come to Ireland to do good and not harm. I am thy friend, and the friend of thy people. I have come to call upon thy King, and to beseech him to turn from his ways and be no more a darkened heathen, and I come to teach the people of Ireland the knowledge of the truth.

HUGH.—O good Saint, come not near me, I mistrust thee.

[*He rises and retreats to the farther end of the room.*] Whist, go back, holy Priest, sure, I can talk quite well to thee at this distance, but if ye are on business elsewhere, I can readily excuse ye, and ye can depart. Ah, [*to himself*] but I am dead already with fear of him, with his long white beard; sure but I think he comes from the other world.

PRIEST.—Why distrust me; do I come with swords and cudgels to kill thee? Shame on thee, man, for thy cowardice. See I am an old man in need of rest, for I trod from Craggie Head the night. Haven't ye a bit of bannock and a sup of milk, and a rug for a poor old man.

HUGH.—Now faith, he talks like a human, and he shames me indeed, for my fears. Good father, ye shall sup and sleep like a gentleman, and if thou lackest aught it will not be the fault of Hugh. Wilt thou sup or sleep first?

PRIEST.—Good Hugh, I will sleep until the morning if thou wilt. Then will I break my fast with the dawning of the day.

HUGH.—Well then, holy father, pass through yonder portal, turn at the second door to thy right, when thou wilt find a bed sufficient for thee, good Priest that thou art. [PRIEST *blesses him and goes out.*]

HUGH.—Ah! but it was the fright that the old Priest put in me. It is not pleasant that I feel yet at all. Who knows that he may not be after coming back and putting a spell on me. It is said that the Druid priests have the power to change a man into an ox, and how would I look with horns upon me, and switching a tail about me sides? Ah, but it is bad luck to me. Hark! O, by the powers of darkness, it is the old fiend himself that is coming this time. [*Noise of many feet outside. Murder and destruction. Enter soldiers bearing KING on a rude litter.*]

SOLDIER.—Fool, cease thy bawling, or by the cudgel of McCool I will knock the skull from thy shoulders. Dost thou not see that the King is wounded. Stir thyself and give what assistance thy muddled brain is capable of giving. [*They set the litter down. KING stirs. They assist him to rise.*]

McMURROUGH.—O, the villains. My head is bursting. Send me Armagh. Come hither, Armagh. Armagh, thou art my right hand. Where is he?

SOLDIER.—Your majesty, Armagh is not here. Wilt thou

be quiet, until we send for the Priest of the grove. Sure, he hath great skill to heal disorders, and thou hast been most foully dealt with. Easy, good King. Ah, may the good saints defend us. Who is yonder? [*Enter PRIEST.*]

PRIEST.—Peace be to thee, my friends, can I be of aid to the wounded man, I have some little skill in treating the wounds of the body. Let me see him. Good friend, let me examine thy wounds. [*He approaches the litter.*]

KING.—I am Dermot McMurrough. Sure no enemy hath ever got the better of me. Haven't I conquered and driven out all the chiefs except Teague of Leath, bad luck to him. And didn't I compel the vanquished Prince of Connaught to bring me food and water. Who said I was wounded? He lies. Sure no one hath the hardihood to strike me a blow in my own kingdom. Armagh come hither and disperse these villains. [*He groans and lies down.*]

PRIEST.—Men, bring hither a basin, we must do somewhat for the King. I will bleed him, afterward he can sleep, then will he be better. [*They bleed him. Then all leave but HUGH and the PRIEST.*]

PRIEST.—Good Hugh, do thou watch beside him and I will retire again to the couch thou gavest me, I am in need of rest, but if he stirreth, call me. Dost thou understand?

HUGH.—I do, worthy father, may thy rest be easy. [*PRIEST goes out leaving HUGH with the wounded KING. INTERVAL. KING stirs, wakes up, looks around and calls HUGH.*]

McMURROUGH.—Where am I? Ha! Hugh is it thee, indeed. O! Saints of the stars defend me. My head is broken entirely. Good Hugh, come nearer, tell me what hath happened.

HUGH.—Your majesty, may the dragons crawl off with me if I can tell thee. Sure the soldiers brought ye back some time since with your head broken and lying as one dead on the litter. No one told me, but I suppose ye were wounded in the fight with the bloody outlaws.

McMURROUGH.—Ah! It all comes back to me, Hugh, my simple-hearted friend, I believe thee a true man. If I did not, I would not tell thee. It was no robber enemy that struck me. It was the man of all others that I trusted and leaned upon. It was Armagh. Hugh, there is treason in every breath



of the wind. Sure there is murder behind every bush. The enemies of the King are in his house and sit beside him. Ah, but I will be avenged on the whole black-hearted lot. They are a band of murdering outlaws. I will take the field to-morrow. What is the time, good Hugh?

HUGH.—Sure, your majesty, it must be near day, I but just now heard the morning crowing of the cocks, and the air feels fresh like the daybreak, and I see a lighter glow in the east.

KING.—Hugh, the good cause must not stand still, nor must I lie idly here, a single hour after the sun hath risen. Canst thou bring me a priest to leech my wounds.

HUGH.—Now may the saints be praised, sure there is one but here in the house. He stopped to crave a lodgment until the morning, with a sup of milk to start with when it is day. He is an old man and a venerable, I will bring him if it please your majesty. [HUGH goes and presently returns with the venerable priest.]

McMURROUGH [*In terror*].—Ah! go away from me. Sure ye are the same one who haunted me but a little while ago in my dream.

PRIEST.—Noble King be easy in thy mind, I come with the best intent to do thee good. How can I assist thee.

McMURROUGH.—Venerable father, I ask thy pardon. As ye must see, I am but lately wounded, and my wits fly away with me. Good priest, I must be off to conquer and exterminate a vile band of outlaws, who distress my subjects, and create great terror throughout my dominions. Ah, but I must be well by the sunrise. Do thy utmost skill.

PRIEST.—Thou must rest. Here is a potion which will calm thy mind and cause thee to sleep. Thou art weak, but repose will bring thee strength.

McMURROUGH.—Hagh. Depart to thy repose [HUGH goes out]. Now venerable man, I would first speak to thee.

PRIEST.—No, your majesty must refrain from talking until thou sleepest. After which I hope to have a great deal of conversation with thee.

McMURROUGH.—I will talk, I must have thy counsel, for I am impressed that thou art a good man, and a true Priest. There hath a band of outlaws infested my kingdom, as I told thee, That hath vexed me sore, for I could not find them to

punish them. It was but yesterday that they assaulted and sorely wounded a faithful subject and a man of my household. But that is not the cause of my greatest vexation. At the head of this band is a man who is my bitterest enemy. Ah, but I could tear his heart from his breast. He hath crossed me in every way, and at the last has defied my authority, good father. I had beside me only yesterday, a man whom I loved more than any other. He was my support, my great reliance, and I could do nought without his counsel. Ah, the bitterness of destroyed confidence. It was his hand that struck me down to-night. When he should have stood by me, and fought for me to the death, he turned against me and smote me to the earth. O, but let me stand on my feet and I will gibbet the lot of them. They do not know Dermot McMurrough, or they would be ere this, embarking to leave Ireland forever. Ha, may the demons take the bloody crew, I will drive them into the sea.

PRIEST.—Peace, peace. Ye must be quiet if ye would stand upon your feet and be Dermot McMurrough again. Ye have fumed yourself into a fever. Take now this potion, and rest; then when thou art restored we will talk further. Take the draught. [*PRIEST gives him the draught, and he soon sleeps.*]

SCENE 2ND.—[*In the Forest near the Black Moor. ARMAGH, BALLYNOOK, NORAH, REDBEARD, CRASSIE and others present.*]

BALLYNOOK.—Armagh, in days gone by our country needed our best endeavours, and we fought side by side, with the same hopes and the same end in view. To-day our country groans under a tyrant more grinding than the one we fought. Let us make common cause, and help our countrymen throw off the usurper's yoke. Thou knowest, Armagh, that I have been a robber. I have taken by force. But what compelled me? Who drove me from home and kindred, for no reason only his jealousy of me? Last night he went down under thy good cudgel, and I only trust his head is thoroughly broken. Armagh, the people love and trust thee. There will be such a rising as hath not been seen since our fathers came over the sea. Only speak the word, and I will send trusty men throughout the land and rally the people. Ah, but they will come with a force that nothing will withstand them!

ARMAGH (*sadly*).—Ah, Ballynook, I cannot, I cannot bear

the name of traitor. I am broken in spirit, and do not wish to add to the woes of my distracted country by bringing on civil war. Peace under McMurrough, bad as he is, is better far than war. Oh let us not make our country groan with such a burden! Perhaps he will now do better. As for myself, I will go to Britain, where thou knowest I was born. This is my country, and when she is in sore need she shall have my services. I will go hence.

BALLYNOOK.—Good Armagh, it is thy presence at the Court that made McMurrough at all bearable. What will he do now? Kill, murder, and ravage the country, from one border to another. Thou art he alone that can bind the people together and make them as one man.

ARMAGH.—I think thou art wrong. I will go hence, and if I am needed I will return. It will be better thus. I have no time to spare, as McMurrough will be on the moor by the turn of the afternoon. I do not fear him, but it is better that I do not meet him. [*Enter BALLYNOOK'S men, dragging DENNIS, who is greatly terrified.*]

MAN.—Here, noble chief, knowest thou this man? We found him skulking in the forest. [*DENNIS throws himself on his knees.*]

BALLYNOOK.—Vile reptile! what mercy dost thou expect? Is it the same that thou gavest? Knowest thou that we have but just now buried mine only son, an innocent lad, that fell by thy hand? Decide thyself. Thou shalt be judge. What shall I do with thee?

DENNIS.—O noble Armagh! plead for me. I am wounded and broken. Good Ballynook, I aimed not to do thy son hurt. I would not have harmed a hair of his head. Thou knowest that it was an inadvertence. Oh let me live, if only to be the meanest servant!

BALLYNOOK.—Men, take him away for the present time. We will consider how to punish him, at some future time.

ARMAGH.—For my sake, strain thy mercy to its utmost in dealing with this fellow. He is no worse than his lord. He is the kind of a villain that McMurrough maketh of honest men. But I must away. Good Ballynook, whenever my country needs me I am ready to come. Thou knowest Faherty, the waterman. When I am needed here, give him this ring which

I now give thee, and tell him to bear it to me. He is a true man, and thou canst trust him. I must leave thee.

NORAH (*advancing and taking his hand*).—Noble Armagh, I cannot permit thee to leave until thou receivest the thanks of a homeless maiden for thy interposition in her behalf, and in behalf of her father, as I now can see, making thyself an out-cast and an exile by so doing. Thy nobleness will ever be remembered by me, and wherever thou goest thou hast my heart with thee.

ARMAGH.—Gentle lady, I did but what any true-hearted man would have done. Thank me not, and cease to think of one whom life hath had the greenness destroyed from it as by fire, and whose heart is as the fallow field turned by the plough.

NORAH.—Ah! noble Sir, but the fallow field is sown and bringeth forth lustily again, and the once green meadow, swept by the fire will, erst while, grow green. O, Armagh, stay with us, and be the leader of the people as my father desireth thee.

ARMAGH.—Thou knowest not how thy words thrill me, but my resolution is taken, and I must hie me to Britain. It is better for our country that I should do so. But I take with me a tender remembrance of thee. Bear me kindly in mind, and hope as I do for a meeting in less stormy times.

NORAH.—Noble Sir, my heart is already thine, and if thou will't, I will go with thee and share thy exile.

ARMAGH.—It must not be. The danger is too great from the Northern robbers on the sea. Nay, gentle maiden, remain with thy father, and the female attendants whom I see with thee, and remember that Armagh has thee enshrined in his breast as his greatest treasure. [*Ballynook advances from rear.*]

BALLYNOOK.—My men desire that thou would'st pass judgment on this fellow Dennis. They will abide thy decision. Bring him. [*They bring DENNIS forward, who is cowering with terror.*]

ARMAGH.—We are men, and have hearts of men. This man is sore wounded. Let his wounds be dressed, and let him be made whole again. It is better to reclaim a bad man than to kill him. Perchance he will be a different tempered man henceforth. Spare him, if he shows himself worthy.

DENNIS.—O, noble Armagh, I thank thee for thy words, I am almost a dead man, but thou revivest hope in me. Truly will I be a better and more faithful man.

CRASSIE [*to his fellows*].—Ah, but it is bad luck to the aim I took at him. Odds, Faith, but I will do better next villain I throw at.

BALLYNOOK.—So be it, as Armagh says. Redbeard, show thyself a true follower of Armagh, and take this fellow to the dame on the hearth and bid her heal his wounds. Now men, disperse to thy hiding places. To-morrow night we will gather at our place of meeting, thence we will away to the depths of the dark forest beyond Cragic Head. There we will be safe from the King's men. Crassie, with six of thy sturdy fellows, see the maiden and her attendants to her place of hiding. As for myself I will meet ye at the place of meeting. Go hence, and may peace and safety attend ye all. [*They depart, leaving BALLYNOOK and ARMAGH alone. NORAH weeping.*]

BALLYNOOK [*to ARMAGH*].—I will go with thee until thou embark. I must e'en talk with thee.

ARMAGH.—I thank thee Ballynook. Let us depart. [*They go.*]

SCENE 3RD.—[*In front of the King's house, an assemblage of rude soldiers. KING comes out with his head bandaged and leaning on McNARISH, whom he has appointed to command the men. Old PRIEST follows:*]

KING.—I tell thee, priest, I will go. I must drive out this villainous band of outlaws, even if I perish on the road. Bring my horse.

PRIEST.—Let us rather wait until thy strength returneth. Thou art not in condition to go abroad. Thou canst better tarry until the morrow at the least.

KING.—Avaunt. By the powers of darkness, but I will go to-day, and now. Beware, Priest, tempt me not further. I will not brook thy objections. Villains, are ye ready. Where is Dennis? Bring him hither.

M McNAGRISH.—Your Majesty. Dennis hath not been seen since the bout last night. He hath either been slain, or hath fallen into the hands of the outlaws.

KING.—Ah! the villain. More likes he has deserted me and gone to make one of the band. Now, men, hear me. He that bringeth Armagh's head to me, him will I give a hundred pieces of gold; and to him who bringeth the head of Ballynook will I do likewise. Ye know that the promises of McMurrough are faithfully kept. But hold. If thou bringest me Ballynook alive, I will give thee two hundred pieces.

PRIEST.—Noble King, and ye men, I am as ye see, an old man. My life hath been spent in doing good, and in leading men to do better and to do no wrong. I will go with you, lest haply I may be of service. O, King, it is not right to fight and shed blood. True, if these men are outlaws, and are robbing and murdering thy subjects wantonly, then should they be banished from the earth, like vile reptiles. But can they not be reclaimed, can they not be made useful men? I pray thee, King, permit me to go among them, and lead them into the paths of virtue and usefulness.

KING.—Ah! blood and murder, but I will not endure such idle babble. Men, get ready to move straightway. Priest, keep thy babble for times of peace, and for ladies' society.

[*They all leave, PRIEST going with them. HUGH appears at side.*]

HUGH.—Ah, but it is myself that is glad to be here, instead of going yonder. I have little mind and no taste for such fighting. Right glad am I that the King forgot to take me with him. I can't understand how he made so great an oversight, but I will be content. [*A cudgel is thrown at him from side*]. Whist! Ah, but I'm murdered entirely. Stop there! Murder! Whoop! [*Enter two robbers at side*].

FIRST ROBBER.—Cease thy yelping, or by the long spoon of McGooly we will have the life of ye. Show us now where we can find some plunder, will ye? or will we be compelled to break your head by way of beginning? [*Strikes at him.*]

HUGH.—Ah! ye villain. Stop now! If ye fight with civilized weapons like that I will e'en take part myself and drive the two of ye into the bog.

[*He seizes the cudgel thrown at him, and lays about him with such effect that both robbers are knocked down, and they finally flee. HUGH dances an Irish jig, flourishing his cudgel.*]

SCENE 4TH.—[*In the forest, McNAGRISH, FITZWILLIAM, and others of the King's officers and men.*]

FITZWILLIAM.—What think ye good Captain? Does Armagh fight with the greenwood men to-day? If so be it, then bad luck to us; for sorry the man will get back to the castle at all. Sure, the fates fight with him, and no man can stand before him. No better soldiers stand in the forest to-day than himself and Ballynook.



MCNAGRISH.—No ; Armagh will not lift a finger against us. He is too shrewd a man for that. Besides, what would be the good of fighting for a handful of outlaws. Sooner or later they will be driven out or killed. No, believe me, he will not be against us to-day ; neither will Ballynook, nor Ballynook's men for that matter. Never the shoon or bonnet of them will we see this day. They are secreted in the deep forest and though they be around us we will not see them. And then, do ye mind that our men have little relish to fight these merry outlaws. Half of our fellows have friends in here, and they are little minded to crack their heads. Sorry the taste of fight will we have to-day.

FITZWILLIAM.—What of this old Priest who followeth us ? Sure, I think that it is bad luck anyhow to have his company. I have often heard that it was ill-favour to meet a Priest or a pig when ye went on an errand of importance. Then how much worse to have the Priest or the pig with ye.

MCNAGRISH.—Whist, man, be quiet. There comes the Priest with the King. [*Enter PRIEST, KING, and two men assisting the King.*]

McMURROUGH.—Captain, hath aught of the robbers been found ; or have ye any tidings of the murdering vagabonds ; the demons fly away with the pack of them.

MCNAGRISH.—I have sent men in all directions, but not a trace of them can be found, save where they have buried the one slain by Dennis, and here is the remains of their encampment. See, it hath not been long since they were here.

McMURROUGH.—Oh, a murrain take them, but we will have them, if we beat the bush from here to the giant's castle.

PRIEST.—Good King, take my counsel, I am older than thou. Return to thy place until thy health improveth. Then, these men will be off their watch and then we can come upon them unawares. Thou art in ill case to beat the forest. Be wise and return.

McMURROUGH.—Priest. I will not brook thy interference further. I command thee to molest me no more, or I will not answer for thy safety. Ha, who cometh here. [*Enter men bearing DENNIS on a litter*]

McMURROUGH.—Villain. What dost thou here. Men, where found you this fellow.

MAN.—You Majesty, we found him in a dame's cottage but just beyond the burn yonder. We thought to bring him here, seeing he might be able to tell ye where to find the outlaws.

McMURROUGH.—Speak, what dost thou here.

DENNIS [*feebly*].—Your Majesty, I was in your service, as you remember, the night we sought the outlaws. I was already sore wounded, and fell into their hands.

McMURROUGH.—Traitor, thou liest. Had'st thou fallen in to their hands, they would have slain thee, without loss of time. How camest thou to escape. Tell me that.

DENNIS.—I would not have escaped death had not Armagh besought in my behalf. He bid them bear me to the dame's cottage, then they did so.

McMURROUGH [*in a rage*].—So Armagh hath influence with the chief of the outlaws, he biddeth, and they obey. Dennis, thou art a traitor, and thy carcass shall hang from yonder tree; up men, with him. But stay, let him remain here on his litter in the forest.

PRIEST.—Your Majesty, I see no harm this man has done. Thou said'st, to me only last night, that he that was wounded was a faithful subject of thine. It is not right to leave a dying man, alone in the forest. I will stay with him.

McMURROUGH.—Thou hast said too much to me already. If thou appeareth in my sight again, I will hang thee up in spite of thy gray hairs. Stay with him, and death to him who giveth either of them succour. Then away to the uttermost part of the forest. Depart. [*They go leaving* PRIEST and DENNIS *alone*.]

PRIEST.—Art thou sorely wounded? I have a balsam here that doth purge and purify a wound. Let me assist thee. Art thou indeed one of the outlaws?

DENNIS.—Venerable father, in good truth, I have so been. What is this country but a people of outlaws? Yonder King is a robber and murderer of the vilest kind. As thou seest, he is a blood-thirsty savage, and mindeth no more to murder his loyal subjects than the outlaws. I tell thee, good father, that his great hatred against Ballynook hath been jealousy of him. Ballynook hath a daughter more fair than any in all Ireland. This monster would have wed her, but she would not. He commanded Ballynook to compel the marriage, but he re-

fused entirely. That brought on the vengeance of McMurrrough, and Ballynook must needs take to the greenwood to escape him. That is what has brought on all this trouble with the outlaws. Much more would I tell thee, but my strength faileth. O Priest, I would that I could lead an honest life.

PRIEST.—Son, thou canst be a much better man henceforth. I come to tell thy people of a better and a nobler life than that they are leading. First, however, let us heal thy bodily ills, then will I tell thee how to live aright. I fear not for thee. We will get assistance and succour in good time. Let us depend on a higher power, when all seems lost to us here. That will never fail us.

DENNIS.—Hark! Ah, they return. Father, every man who cometh is an enemy to me.—[*Enter REDBEARD and Crassie.*]

REDBEARD.—What meaneth this! Ha, but here is that fellow again. Venerable man, what doeth thou here with this wounded man, whom we left in a place of security? Knowest thou that the forest is filled with armed men.

PRIEST.—Sir, when we get this man to a place of safety, then can I tell thee how I came hither. I know of the King's soldiers being here, as I came with them, but not of them. Come, let us bear him away.

REDBEARD.—Father, thy words constrain me to do what I would not. We will bear him away for thy sake. [*They go, carrying DENNIS on a litter.*]

SCENE 5TH.—[*On the sea-shore, near the place of embarkation. ARMAGH and BALLYNOOK conversing. FAHERTY, the waterman, in a boat.*]

BALLYNOOK—Good Armagh, my spirit is disturbed to see thee depart. I would that thou wert to stay. But rest thou assured that the hearts of the people are with thee, and I am sure that no one can bind the people together as thou canst.

ARMAGH—I go, believing that it is for the best. O, that peace and quietness could come to my distracted country! O Ballynook! I love Erin more than any earthly good, willingly would I depart and remain an exile, if by so doing I could bring quietude to these shores. Ballynook, if aught should happen that it is necessary for me to return, delay not, but

send at once as I bid thee. O, my loved country, fare thee well. Ballynook, farewell. [*They embrace.* ARMAGH and WATERMAN *leave.*]

BALLYNOOK [*to himself.*—Ah! It is a sad day that sees thee go, thou hope of thy country. I feel that to-day I am bereft of my earthly prop and stay. I regret my past unlawful life, and it seemeth that, had I been living honestly, then would my loved son be living, and Armagh would not have been an exile. But henceforth will I live for Ireland, and for her best interests. [*Enter old PRIEST.*]

PRIEST—Son, I heard thy remarks. Knowest thou not that the paths of right and virtue are ever open and straight. There is no difficulty when thou seest aright to do that which is right. If I behold thee aright thou art the chief of what thy fellows call the outlaws.

BALLYNOOK—In truth, good sir, thou speakest aright. I am Ballynook.

PRIEST—Ballynook, thy course has been wrong. Thou hast set aside lawful authority, and hast preyed on the honest people of this land. But I know thee, and know how thou camest into this kind of life. I blame thee but little. Still, thou shouldst have taken other means to make thy livelihood. But to upbraid thee will not restore the past. Let us try to atone for the past in living better in the future. [*Enter REDBEARD and CRASSIE.*]

REDBEARD [*greatly agitated.*—Good Ballynook, and ye, venerable father, away, hide ye yonder in the copse. Flee for your lives. The King cometh with his men. Leave me here to hold them. [*They retire, leaving REDBEARD.* Enter KING, with FITZWILLIAM, MCNAGRISH, and others.]

McMURROUGH—Ha! Death and destruction! but who is this. O, thou double-dyed scoundrel. I know thee, though it is many days since I saw thee. On him men. Tear him limb from limb. It is Redbeard, the craftiest villain of the lot. Down with him. [*REDBEARD draws.*]

MCNAGRISH—Your majesty, it is better that we take him, and, peradventure, we may find from him where the chief of the men may be found. Let us put him under sure guard, and question him further. I will be surety for his safe delivery into thy hands.

McMURROUGH—The demon's whelp, but it sore distresseth me to permit him to live after he is in my power. So be it then. We will give him respite, until he lead us to the meeting place of the rest of his fellows ; bind him, and make him sure. Men, away. Haply others are in the neighbourhood, for like the wolf they hunt in packs. McNagrish, do thou talk with this fellow. Let us away. [*They go, leaving REDBEARD with McNAGRISH.*]

McNAGRISH—Redbeard, truly am I sorry that thou art in the power of the king. Well I remember thee and thy valour. But since we have fought together I pity thee, but I tell thee truly that I have done all for thee possible. I have given thee short duration, but I know thee too well to ask thee to betray thy companions. I would e'en despise thee more heartily than I pity thee, if I thought thee capable of doing such a thing. I must likewise be loyal to my master, even the King. So I can show thee no further indulgence, only to make thy condition as easy as I can.

REDBEARD.—McNagrish, thou art the same generous man thou always wast. I do not ask thee to jeopardize thyself with the King for my sake. Only, McNagrish bear to my aged sire the words which I give thee. Tell him his son would fain have died for him and for old Ireland, but as I was taken as an outlaw, I must e'en die as an outlaw. But tell him that I die without fear, and that at the last I defied the tyrant McMurrough to his teeth. I thank thee for these few hours of life that thou hast granted me, McNagrish. I know not how this man may appoint me to die, but after he has done his worst, I ask thee as the last friend I have near me, to take the charm which you will find on my breast, suspended by a gold cord, and take it to Kathleen who lives in the dell, hard by Craggie Head, And tell her that my last thoughts on earth were of her, and of old Ireland.

McNAGRISH.—Stop, thou wilt make a woman of me, Redbeard. I, too, love old Ireland, and ask no higher fate than that my blood be spilt for her. Yes, I will e'en do as thou sayest. I will bear thy messages for thee. Yea, good comrade, though it be at the cost of my life will I bear thy messages. Now, let us away. [*They go out.*]

## PART THIRD.

SCENE 1ST.—[*In the audience chamber of the King, ETHELRED of Britain. Present—ANDELWALD, EDGAR (the King's brother), ESTELLA (a beautiful maiden, the King's sister.) KING speaks, (King a youth.)*]

ETHELRED.—How sayest thou, Anselwald. Cometh again to our shores the noble Armagh. It is well that he cometh. He is a good man and a true, and cometh with no evil intent. Ah, that all men came as doth he. My mind is sore troubled with the evil intentions of men about me. I knew not how vile and wicked was the heart of man until I were a king. And more I learn every day of this evil intent in man. Good Anselwald, I would I were a shepherd boy, to rove through the blooming vales and meet no worse companions than my sheep. Then would I be happy, so that Edgar and Estella were by my side. When Armagh cometh, bring him hither, that I may ask him how speedeth the people of our neighbouring land.

ANDELWALD.—I think he is hard by. But small welcome would he get did he wait for Anselwald to bid him come in peace. A man of his import cometh not through all the dangers of the sea on idle errand. Believe me, your majesty, he cometh for no good. Being older and more experienced in the wickedness that thou speakest of, I would set spies upon him, to guard the object of his visit. Great King, I know his master, e'en that crafty fox, Dermot McMurrough. I know that he scruplenth not to slay whosoever he is minded. It is but morning recreation for him to hang up a squad of his courtiers to make amusement for the survivors. Thus keeping in mind the brutal nature of the King, what should we expect of his chief captain and adviser.

ESTELLA.—Good Anselwald, I remember well this man thou speakest of. I saw him when he abode in the court of our uncle, the former king. He was then a man of most likely and noble presence; his conversation was of a dignified and impressible order; likewise were his words full of wisdom



and gentleness. He may come on missions of mercy, and surely he deserveth not our censure until we know some what of wrong against him.

EDGAR [*a hot, impulsive boy*].—So talk all women. Hath a man a pleasant face and lordly carriage, then will the female folk see nought but good in him. Were I King as thou art, brother, I would send this Irish lord howling back to his native bogs, or I would pitch him heels and neck into the sea.

ETHELRED.—Boy, be still. Learn to curb thy wayward tongue; or who can answer for the safety of thy empty head. Sister, thy speech is far beyond thy years and sex for wisdom. Andelwald, bring the noble prince hither at thy convenience, I must speak with him. Brother, go thou bring the aged Cambrian harper that he may sing to me of the glories of the olden time. [*Andelwald and Edgar go out.*]

ETHELRED.—Gentle sister, I would that I had such a prince beside me as this noble Armagh. I feel no fear to meet him, although I know him not. He is a man of peace and wisdom. That agreeth with my nature far better than war and blood. Some that come and fawn upon me, fill me with a nameless dread and terror. So do these Druid Priests, these men of blood and death. O sister! tell me the story of that new unknown belief, that is full of peace and gentleness.

ESTELLA.—Thou art now a King, and must be a King in thy manner, and according to the custom of these times. It is not meet that these courtiers and sturdy men-at-arms should hear thee speak thus. 'Tis well that none heareth thee but me, or else they would revile thee. However, thou canst be a better king if thou bearest in thy heart the teachings of this new religion. Hark! some one cometh. [*Enter HARPER, an old man, with boy bearing his harp, and EDGAR.*]

EDGAR.—Here, noble brother, is the Harper, who will discourse pleasant music to thy liking. As for me, with thy permission, I will depart hence, to hunt the hare with thy Forester.

ETHELRED.—Go, and may peace and safety attend thee. And thou, venerable father, I trust thou art in good and wholesome case to-day?

HARPER [*making obeisance*].—Mighty King, thy servant hath not aught in that behalf to complain. I have sufficient food, proper shelter, and no grievous pain distresseth me.

ETHELRED.—Wilt thou sing unto me of the glories of the elder days? But first let me sustain thee with this wholesome draught. [KING pours out a flagon of liquid and hands him. *He drinks.*]

HARPER.—Ah, but there is new life in that precious draught. It warms the old blood in my veins, and maketh my heart to be young again. May health and long life attend thee, and the gentle maiden at thy side. Now will I sing thee a song that no man within these borders hath heard since thy grandfather sat upon thy throne. [*He sings, accompanying himself on the harp. Song in the ancient Cambrian tongue. Interval. Noise outside. Enter ANDELWALD, with ARMAGH. Harper ceases.*]

ETHELRED.—Andelwald, thou art welcome. Bringest thou the noble Prince of Ireland?

ANDELWALD.—Yea, my lord, this is he. [ARMAGH bows.]

ETHELRED.—Noble Armagh, right glad am I to meet thee, and bid thee welcome to my kingdom. Thou art more than welcome, noble Prince.

ARMAGH.—Mighty King, there is no more welcome task to me than to greet thee. The fame of thy youthful wisdom and valour, and of thy regard for thy subjects hath penetrated even to the remotest nations.

ETHELRED.—Enough, good Armagh. Thou must be my guest whilst thou tarriest here. Dost thou regard the chase? Then my gentle brother will guide thee through the forest in quest of the fleeing deer, or with nimble hawk bring down the lofty heron for thy pleasure. Now will we hear the residue of the worthy father's song, which was broken by thy entrance. Father, complete thy song. [HARPER sings and plays. *Scene closes.*]

SCENE 2ND.—[*In the forest of Ireland, near the Outlaws' place of meeting. Enter FITZWILLIAM and others of the KING'S men, with BALLYNOOK, captive.*]

FITZWILLIAM.—Men, gently with this one. I think me that from his look he is no common man among the merry greenwood men. But it is bad luck to be hunting the likes of him. He is a fine-looking man. Ah, but he is a brave one, too. Did'st thou see that he scorned to flee from us? Sure, but I am minded to let him depart in peace, for he may be the lord of some of these lands beyond. Speak, friend. Art thou an honest man, and not one of the outlaws whom we seek?

BALLYNOOK.—Fitzwilliam, I scorn to lie to thee, as I did to flee from thee. Thou hast an honest heart, but I ask not aught of favour of thee. Do thy King's command, even to slay me.

FITZWILLIAM [*to his fellows*].—Ah, but it is the fine-spoken gentleman that he is, and no robber. Sir [*to BALLYNOOK*], it is after asking your pardon that we are, and a good speed on your journey, and prosperous luck to the business ye was driving.

BALLYNOOK.—Since you are so good as to bid me, I will go. But mind, it is thy own wish that I depart. [*Noise, trumpets and voices. Enter MCMURROUGH, with MCNAGRISH, and others.*]

MCMURROUGH.—Bad luck to the villainous robbers! My head is bursting with the pain of hunting the forest. Here is Fitzwilliam and my trusty men. Ah! blood and murder! Do I see him? Give me a spear! [*He snatches a spear from a soldier and rushes at BALLYNOOK. FITZWILLIAM throws himself before BALLYNOOK.*]

FITZWILLIAM.—Your Majesty, stay! This is a worthy gentleman we detained through ignorance. Let me speak. [*KING more enraged, strikes with vengeance at BALLYNOOK, kills FITZWILLIAM, and mortally wounds BALLYNOOK. Then, through excess of rage and his former hunt, swoons away. Men scatter, some bearing off the KING. They leave FITZWILLIAM'S body and BALLYNOOK on the ground.*]

SCENE 3.—[*In the Dame's Cottage. BALLYNOOK upon the bed, dying. NORAH weeping over him, other maidens present weeping, REDBEARD, CRASSIE and other outlaws. Dame, (old woman) ministering unto the dying man. He calls REDBEARD.*]

BALLYNOOK.—My faithful well-tried friend; I would, were it possible, that the venerable Priest speak to me. If he come I would spend the last fleeting moments of my life with him. But while I have the strength I would charge thee to take this ring, bear it to Faherty the waterman, take with it also my bow string that is red with my blood, and bid him take them straightway to Armagh. Didst thou understand good Redbeard?

REDBEARD.—Yea, my friend, I do. [*He weeps.*]

BALLYNOOK.—And, Redbeard, whilst thou hast life in thy body, I charge thee never to forsake my only remaining child, my daughter Norah, until she hath a proper place of safety. Now let her come hither. My daughter, thy father hath fought his last battle, and soon will be no more. I charge thee to remember the good he hath done and not the bad. I would that I could live for thy sake, but thou knowest I am near death. [*Enter attendants with the carcass of a calf and with materials to kindle the Banshee light, to frighten away the bad spirits and to light the departing soul to the happy abode of the good. Attendants set up a wailing. Enter OUTLAW with OLD PRIEST.*]

BALLYNOOK.—Good father, I am glad to see thee come. Sure, I have come to a part of the journey where I am in the dark and require a guide and assistance. The darkness is coming upon me, and I need a light. Canst thou give it?

PRIEST.—I will do what remaineth for human power to do. Leave me with this dying man and his child. [*They all go out but NORAH and PRIEST. Scene closes. Curtain drops. Interval, and Curtain raises on same scene, with Norah and attendant maidens weeping over the body of BALLYNOOK. Banshee fire burning. Outlaws waking the body*]

SCENE 4TH.—[*In ETHELRED'S Court again. ETHELRED ANDELWALD, and ESTELLA present*].

ETHELRED.—How thinkest thou, good Andelwald, of the Irish Prince now?

ANDELWALD.—Your Majesty, I must say he bears himself right nobly for his former education. He speaketh discreetly, and seemeth to be a good man.

ESTELLA.—Thou art right, and no one can see him but will think as thou thinkest. [*Enter EDGAR noisily.*]

ETHELRED.—Whence comest thou now, youngster, with such bluster and lack of ceremony? Canst thou not mend thy pace when thou enterest our presence?

EDGAR.—Pardon me, royal brother, but I think of thee most as my loving brother, and not as my lawful King.

ETHELRED.—Thou art welcome to come as thou pleasest. I did but jest with thee. But whence art thou?

EDGAR.—I come but just from the fields where I hunted with thy noble guest, the Irish Prince. He is a fine gentle-

man, and I would that he hunted with me every day. He hath entertained me most royally, besides he hath a merry heart for the sports of the field. Twice this day the fleeing deer would have sped from me, but his strong bow and unerring arrow stopped it. Canst thou not bid him stay, and dwell in our country, which is far better than the land he hath left. I will e'en now go fetch him in. [EDGAR leaves]

ETHELRED.—So it seemeth that this man hath made a conquest, his royal master, the doughty McMurrough, could not have made. He hath won the good will of my impulsive brother, as well as thine, Andelwald. But here he cometh with Edgar. [Enter ARMAGH, making obeisance to the KING and ETHELRED.]

ETHELRED.—Armagh, welcome, how fared the sport to-day? To judge of what Edgar saith, thou art slaying all my deer.

ARMAGH.—Your Majesty, well have I enjoyed the pleasures of this day, and the pleasant companionship of thy brother. He hath a merry heart, and is a most honourable sportsman. He always giveth the deer a chance to escape with his life.

ETHELRED.—Aye, truly; and most frequently do they improve his generous chance, and speed them away.

EDGAR.—Brother, thou knowest that I often bring thee a royal haunch of most excellent venison, besides other small game.

ETHELRED.—Truly thou dost, especially when such hunters as our friend Armagh go with thee. But we will talk of weightier matters. Good Armagh, how speedeth the people of thy land. Hath the King secured the love and respect of his subjects?

ARMAGH [*sadly*].—Ah, noble King. Him thou see'st before thee, hath no land, no country, and no King. I am an outcast from the land of my fathers. I am an exile, having incurred the displeasure of the King.

ETHELRED.—Armagh, I am much astonished as well as grieved to hear thee speak thus. Again, am I glad, for here canst thou remain and be a member of our household. Yea, good Armagh, abide with us. Thou art more than welcome.

EDGAR.—Hurrah! stay with us; we will go hunting every day.

ETHELRED.—Peace. Keep thy noise and hallooing for

thy chase in the forest. But hark! Andelwald wilt thou go and find the cause of such unseemly disturbance outside. [*He goes and presently returns with English soldiers, leading a rough Irishman.*]

IRISHMAN.—I tell thee that I will fight the lot of ye, only give me the blackthorn splinter that I had in old Ireland. May the saints preserve my eyes till I see her again. And it's a burning shame to ye not to know how to treat a gentleman who comes only to be speaking to so fine a gentleman as the great Armagh, bad luck to ye all for beggarly thieves to be leading a man around like a bullock by the horns at a fair, to be gazed at and stroked by every body. Away now and hands off me for a fair showing and I will fight the lot of ye.

ETHELRED.—Percy, whence came ye with this man, and what have ye done to him? I perceive he is a citizen of our neighbouring land.

PERCY [*a soldier*].—Your Majesty, we found him wandering in the forest and calling for Armagh. We deemed him mad, and brought him hither for thee to judge what shall be done with him. [*Soldiers go out.*]

ARMAGH [*coming forward*].—Let me see this man. This voice is familiar to me. Ah! [*astonished*] It is, Hugh. Good fellow, what doest thou here?

HUGH [*breaking away and embracing ARMAGH*].—Ah your honour, but its surely dreaming, that I am. Somebody strike me and see if I waken. May the saints keep me safe until I see another so welcome a sight as you honour's face. Sure, it is speechless I am with joy at meeting ye in this vagabond and heathenish land. Bad luck to the villains for trotting me about for the entertainment of the gaping crowd of heathens.

ARMAGH.—Easy, Hugh, see'st thou that thou art now in the presence of the King, and the ladies of the court. I shall be ashamed that thou art a countryman of mine.

HUGH.—Bad luck to me for a vagabond if I have offended his majesty or the ladies. Sure, I will be after axing pardon if you will introduce me to the King, and the ladies.

ARMAGH.—Your majesty, this man hath been in the service of Dermot McMurrough, and I knew him to be an honest and faithful fellow. I know not how he came hither. We will ask him.



HUGH.—Ah and is it the fine gentleman you were after speaking to, the King. Your majesty, long life to your honour, and may the snakes crawl off with the vagabond that spakes ill of ye, at all, or the fine young lady who I consate is your majesty's sister, as ye both have the same sparkling eyes. Sure I am killed entirely for fear I have spoken too rudely. I hope your honour will give me time to speak with the noble Armagh before ye hang me. Ah [*shuddering*], but it was near I came to it over yonder.

ETHELRED.—Friend, fear no harm. Only collect thy scattered wits and tell us how camest thou hither?

HUGH.—Ah, but it is long life to your majesty for a pleasant spoken gentleman, and may my right arm drop off, but I would fight a host of such blaggards. I beg your honour's pardon, such gentlemen as brought me in for ye. Sure, I am faint for drink, as may the saints keep the drop I have tasted since yesterday, barring a half-dozen or so times.

ETHELRED.—Give him to drink, attend to his wants, then tell us, Hugh, thy journey to Britain, [*They give him a flagon, and he drinks long, and with considerable noise.*]

HUGH.—Ah, but it is no wonder that your majesty is so handsome and rosy, when ye drink such as that. Sure, but it brings the life back to me and I feel braver than I have for this twelve month. Sorry the bit of water would pass my lips did I get the likes every day. I'll take another sup. [*He drinks again.*]

ETHELRED.—Now, Hugh, I see thou art much refreshed, and altogether a new man. Thou hast nothing to fear, now without any waste of words tell us how camest thou in the forest, when we thought thee in the service of the good King Dermot.

HUGH.—May the demons possess all such good kings as he, hoping your majesty and the ladies will not tell him I said so, for he is in a bad humour anyhow. But the noble Armagh [*may the saints preserve him*] knows how that the King hath been fighting the robbers and outlaws. Well, then he got worsted and was brought home all bloody and insensible and with his head broke as elegantly as I could have done it myself with a stick.

ARMAGH.—Cut thy story short, and tell plainly how thou camest to leave thy place.

HUGH.—Well, then, after that, he would collect the men together and go out, in spite of myself and the old priest and everybody else. Sure it was the towering rage he was in, and he with his head tied up, but off they all posted, and left me alone in the home, when two vagabond thieves came in, and I took a bit of a switch and broke the heads of the two of them.

ARMAGH.—Hugh, tell at once how thou camest hither?

HUGH.—As I told thee they went off, old priest and all, and on the second day following, save one, sure they returned the same way, only the King this time did not come to himself until the fourth day after, only roaring and groaning with the fever and the pain. O, but it was troublesome times when he began to come to himself. Sure, but he would call for his sword, or a spear, and nobody durst disobey him, then he would throw the spear at the first man he could see. Sure but it is the dragon's own boy he is now. Well, then one day the priest came to leech him, and the priest told him that he had such a hurt in his back, that with the riding and the exposure in the night, and the hunt and all that, that he never could walk again, then but for his escaping would the King have killed him entirely. As it was, it was dangerous for anyone to go in. At last he sent for me, and I went to the door all trembling, for I didn't know but he would take the life of me. And he says, said he, my dear good Hugh wilt thou help me out of the bed? When I tried to lift him I was so frightened of him that I slipped and let him drop in the bed. Ah, but it was then that he roared, and I made off with all speed, but I heard him order me to be hanged without any ceremony; and sure but I kept running till I came to the sea coast, and I hired with the boatman there who was about to leave, and after coming near being drowned with the wind and the water, I was put ashore in this beggarly country asking your majesty's pardon, and the ladies. And the soldiers picked me up and mistreated me, and pulled me about, until they brought me here, and here I am. And to be sure, your majesty will not be after sending me back to be hanged at all.

ETHELRED.—No, good Hugh, you shall not be sent back.

You shall remain here as long as ye like. Here men, take him and supply his wants. [*They take him out.*]

SCENE 5TH.—[*In DERMOT MCMURROUGH'S house, in his bed chamber. MCMURROUGH in bed, propped up with pillows.*]

MCMURROUGH (*calls*).—Ho, villains, cravens! where are ye gone. Would ye be leaving a man to die alone in his bed. I will murder the last one of ye when I am out of this. [*Enter a Druid Priest making obeisance.*]

PRIEST.—How fares it with your majesty to-day?

MCMURROUGH.—Ha, well may you ask, when you all shun me as if I were a beast that would tear ye.

PRIEST.—I come every day, your majesty, to see thee. Thou art too violent in thy mind, calm thyself and thou wilt be better.

MCMURROUGH [*reaching for weapons.*].—Villain! I will spike thee to the wall for thy insolence.

PRIEST.—Hold! Man thou art distempered. Would'st thou lift a hand against the Priest of the sacred grove? Why would'st thou murder me, when I come to do thee good? Nay, give me thy weapons. Now hear me, McMurrough. Would'st thou ever stand on thy feet and be a man again? Hast thou a desire to mount thy horse and do battle against thy enemies? then must thou curb thyself and be less a savage monster. Thy people leave thee because thou art so fierce and cruel to them. Who would enter here when thou hast thy weapons, and casts them at every one who enters?

MCMURROUGH.—Avaunt, false, lying knave. Leave my sight, and may the demons take me but I will give orders that the hated brood of Priests shall be destroyed, and thy groves and temples burnt to the ground. Ho, there, attendant. [*Attendant comes.*]

MCMURROUGH.—Stand not there but send me McNagrish. [*PRIEST and attendant go out.*] Ha, the dragons take the vile disease that keeps me here, when I have so much to do. Oh, the vile brood of vipers! I will crush them, if I hang and slay every Priest and villainous outlaw on this island. [*Enter McNAGRISH.*]

MCMURROUGH.—McNagrish, thou art my only remaining stay, my only hold on the government of this country. Knowest thou aught of the whereabouts of Armagh?

McNAGRISH.—I know not, save I have heard that he has crossed to Britain.

McMURROUGH.—Ah! He has gone to the court of the mighty Ethelred. I wonder hath he entered the service of that downy youth. Ah, may the saints despise the days when shepherd lads are Kings. But then, good Captain, it is better than a warlike man were King.

McNAGRISH.—I know little, save that I heard from some one that Armagh was after cultivating the soil, and leading a herdsman's life in that country.

McMURROUGH.—Well, so be it. It is better than he was fighting us. Dost thou know, McNagrish, that it was indeed Armagh that struck me the blow that was the cause of all this distemper. But it surely was he for no other man in the seven kingdoms can strike so heavily. McNagrish, I loved that man as he were my only brother. Why think you did he turn against me, and in behalf of the murdering outlaw?

McNAGRISH.—I know not. But let us talk of other matters, or better still not talk at all. Hast thou any commands? Would'st thou that I call anyone?

McMURROUGH.—Yea, since thou hast spoken, call me the old Priest that was with me at the time of the last fight with the outlaws. I would speak with him. Knowest thou of him?

McNAGRISH.—Yea, I have heard somewhat of him. He healeth many diseases among the people, and many follow after him and he speaketh often to them. His words are wisdom, and he teacheth a new doctrine, even that we should fight no more but forgive the injuries our enemies do us. [*Voice outside.*]

VOICE.—Woe unto the men of blood. Their days shall be consumed in pain, and their nights shall go down in darkness.

McMURROUGH.—Bad luck to me, but what is that! Good Captain, go outside and see who it is that insulteth me thus in mine own house. [McNAGRISH goes out.]

## PART FOURTH.

SCENE 1ST.—[*In the forest in England, ARMAGH and EDGAR, the King's brother, in hunting costume. HUGH following behind.*]

HUGH [*talking to himself*].—Bad cess to the villainous country that this is. Sure a man don't get such to eat as the dogs in old Ireland hide in the earth. The bones of me are rattling with starvation. Ah! but who comes yonder. By the holy poker, it is Faherty. [HUGH runs to embrace him. Enter FAHERTY.]

FAHERTY.—May the saints defend me but it is Hugh. Be easy now, will you, till I speak to his Honour, the noble Armagh. Long life to your honour. [*He bows before ARMAGH.*]

ARMAGH.—Ha! speak man. Thou bearest tidings. Good Faherty, tell me quickly thy summons.

FAHERTY.—Here, I have a packet for thee which I have carried in my bosom from across the sea. [*He gives packet to ARMAGH.*]

ARMAGH [*opens packet*].—Ah, my bleeding country, but it is my own ring, and by this token she calls me home. What is this? It is Ballynook's bowstring, and red with blood. I understand the import of this. Edgar bear my going to your royal brother and to your sister. I must away with this man. To-day my country calls me and I must not idle here. Noble youth, farewell. [EDGAR weeps and falls upon his neck.]

EDGAR.—Noble sir, I will not leave thee. Let me bear thee company across the sea. I cannot part from thee.

ARMAGH.—Son, it cannot be. Thou knowest not the state of the people there. Thou art too young to go now, and the times are too much troubled for thee to go. Nay, abide here until peace returns to our borders, then shalt thou come and live with me. [EDGAR still clings to him.]

EDGAR.—O, noble Armagh, I shall not see thee again, if thou leavest me, I will not leave thee unless thou command me.

ARMAGH.—Then, Edgar, I command thee to stay. It tear-eth me to leave thee, but I must go. Here I leave with thee my trusty friend Hugh, who will come with thee when it is

proper for thee. Good Hugh, remain with the lad and share his sports.

HUGH.—I will, your honour, as ye ask me to, but will ye be telling the King that I always spake well of him, and that there's no occasion for him to be hanging me for dropping him in the bed.

ARMAGH.—Hugh, keep thou the young man safe, and remember to speak always discreetly and speak but little. And when peace shall prevail in our country. I would have thee return. Farewell! good friend! Edgar, thou hast the heart of a hero. Thou knowest not the unsettled state of my land. Be of good cheer [*embraces him*]. Good honest Hugh, farewell [*shakes HUGH's hand*]. [*Exit ARMAGH and FAHERTY. EDGAR throws himself on the ground.*]

EDGAR.—O Hugh, thou knowest not how I love the noble Armagh. He is the light of my life, and all is darkness when he is gone. Oh, what shall I do, I love my brother, but he is not of my mind. His mind runneth to the society of ladies and of the soft and tender things of peace and books. My gentle sister even is more warlike than he. But Armagh, is of my mind. He is a soldier. He hath fought on the Black Moor, and his words stir me at times like the note of battle. But we will join him, Hugh. We will prepare and go forth with him to fight.

HUGH.—That we will, my lad. Sure, but will we take our sticks and sorry a head will we leave not cracked at all, and when he marches in to be the King, we will follow with the rest, with our hats on our sticks, and singing like father Jack Welch at the fair [*they go out*].

SCENE 2ND.—[*In Ireland. Near the King's house in the forest. Enter McNAGRISH, and others of the King's soldiers.*]

MCNAGRISH.—Brian, hast thou heard the tidings of the coming of Teague. He hath heard of the illness of our master and he cometh with great force, to overthrow us, and murder McMurrough in his bed. Sure, but I think the times will be hard for us and no one to lead the men to battle. It will not be proper to tell the King, or he will be after trying to mount his horse and lead us to battle. There is one man whom I wish to see in Old Ireland.



BRIAN.—Sure, but I read thy thoughts. Thou speakest of Armagh.

MCNAGRISH.—Brian. Thou art right. Though Dermot McMurrough be thy mother's son, yet I tell thee that he was too rash with Armagh. He hath a noble spirit, and will not be trodden upon.

BRIAN.—My brother hath a violent spirit, and would as quickly hurl a dart through me as through the meanest slave in the land. We must remember that [*enter SOLDIER breathless*].

SOLDIER.—Hark ye good captain, and ye, noble Brian. Sure, there cometh beyond the long bog, the bloody Teague of Leath, and he burneth and slayeth before him. He hath above a thousand men, and the people are perishing before him. Ah bad luck to us, but we will all be murdered entirely.

MCNAGRISH.—Good Brian, what shall we do, Sure it will never do to tell the King of the troubles. Here, friend. Set a guard about the King's house, and see that none passeth, nor that no tidings be brought the King [*enter old PRIEST unperceived*], Brian we must endeavour to rally the men together [*PRIEST comes forward*].

PRIEST.—Good friend, peace be to thee. Thou art troubled, and well thou mayest be, for but few men stand before Teague of Leath. There is one man who can bind the people together as one man, and in whose good right arm stays the strength of a hundred Teagues. If thou wilt, I will bring him hither, for he is hard by.

BRIAN.—Father, as the brother of the King, and having his authority during his sickness, I bid thee bring this man. [*PRIEST goes out, and returns soon with ARMAGH. BRIAN and MCNAGRISH salute him warmly.*]

BRIAN.—Sir, thou art, I know, a true and lawful son of Erin. Thou art not willing to see her people perish. We have no time to waste in words. Here is the ancient sword of the Kings of Ireland. Take it, and lead the people against their enemies.

ARMAGH.—Brian, my arm is ever ready to strike for my country. I know no higher duty than her service. But I would much better fight with the people, and thou, the King's brother, command.

BRIAN.—I will not. Here, take the sword. And thou, McNagrish, go forth and make proclamation to the people to come forth and fight for their homes, and for their King, and for Armagh. [MCNAGRISH goes. PRIEST goes another way.]

BRIAN.—Armagh, thou most likely heard that the King hath a severe illness, and all these things must be kept from him. Likewise, begging pardon of your honour, he must not know that thou art here.

ARMAGH.—I should not have returned, only that there was occasion of war. But we have not time for idle talk. Let us away and prepare for the battle. [They go out.]

SCENE 3RD.—[In the open field, hard by the Long Bog. ARMAGH in the garb of battle, with drawn sword in his hand. BRIAN and MCNAGRISH, REDBEARD, and many others standing around. Noise of shouting and trumpets in the distance.]

ARMAGH.—Men, hear ye yonder the noise of the coming of the invaders. Behind ye lieth the homes ye have left, with the women and children of your bosoms looking to ye for protection. This day must these homes be made desolate, or the enemies of your King and country must be driven back. Do I speak to men, or to cravens and cowards? [All speak.]

ALL.—Lead us, noble Armagh. [Enter HUGH flourishing a cudgel.]

HUGH.—Bad luck to me, but I must fight with the bold Armagh. [Enter EDGAR, throwing himself into ARMAGH's arms.]

EDGAR.—I will fight by thy side until thou conquer thy enemies.

ARMAGH.—Rash youth, how camest thou hither? But thou must away. Go, I command thee, to the rear of the battle. [EDGAR goes reluctantly away. HUGH goes with him at the command of ARMAGH.]

ARMAGH.—Men, every one to his duty. Go forth, and may victory and success go with you. [All go but ARMAGH and BRIAN. Great noise of battle outside. Men come carrying dead and wounded men to the rear. BRIAN goes hastily out. DENNIS appears, and bows to ARMAGH.]

DENNIS.—Noble sir, this day would I prove to thee that I am a true son of Erin. I would that thou permit me to fight.

ARMAGH.—Go, good Dennis, thy country needs thee in the

battle. [DENNIS draws sword and goes out. ARMAGH follows him. Interval. Great noise of battle. They still bear the wounded bleeding to the rear. Enter TEAGUE OF LEATH, an enormous man with a large sword reeking with blood.]

TEAGUE.—Ha ! Murder and destruction ! Show me the champion of this people. Where now is the noble Armagh. I am Teague of Leath, and no one durst stand before me. Let him come. He feareth the face of the mighty Teague of Leath. Whoop ! [TEAGUE flourishes his sword, and calls for someone to meet him. Enter ARMAGH, with the sword of the KING in his hand.]

ARMAGH.—Vile boaster, this day shalt the ground which thou desecrated with thy presence drink thy blood. Villain, defend thyself. [TEAGUE strikes a terrible blow at him. ARMAGH parries the blow, and they go to battle. ARMAGH crowds TEAGUE back, but slips and falls backward.]

TEAGUE.—Now I have thee. Now thou diest. [He aims a blow at ARMAGH'S breast, but EDGAR rushes out, throws himself on ARMAGH, and is slain by the sword of TEAGUE. HUGH, following EDGAR, strikes the Rebel Chief a furious stroke with his cudgel, and ARMAGH slays TEAGUE with his sword. The followers of TEAGUE flee when they see their leader fall. General rout of TEAGUE'S men. ARMAGH kneeling by EDGAR'S body, weeps o'er him. Enter COURIER breathless.]

COURIER.—Your honour, the enemy flee, and our soldiers follow cutting them in pieces. [Enter BRIAN.]

ARMAGH.—Brian, go thou and command the people. See that they stay not until the invaders are driven from our soil. As for myself, I am overcome with grief. Here is the body of a noble youth, who died that I might live. Leave me alone with him.

BRIAN.—It shall be done. The enemy is defeated, their chief is slain, and we will drive the remnant of them out of our borders. Thou has fought to good purpose to-day. [BRIAN goes.]

HUGH.—Indeed we have fought well. It is sad that the fine young man's slain. He was too rash for his own safety. Ha, that is my opinion that for good fighting a bit of a black-thorn stick is far superior to anything else.

[HUGH brings a mantle and wraps the body of EDGAR. Then it is borne out, followed by ARMAGH. *Dirge music outside.*]

SCENE 4th [In DERMOT MCMURROUGH'S bedchamber. KING pale and anxious. He is feeble and much reduced. Talks to himself.]

MCMURROUGH.—Ha, there is somewhat that is wrong. Methinks I have heard unwonted noises, and it seemeth like the sound of battle. I must know how matters progresseth outside. Ho, there, ye sleepy villain. [*Enter attendant.*]

ATTENDANT [*keeping near the door*]. Did your Majesty call?

KING.—Did I call? Yea, caitiff, loud enough to waken the priests in the old temple down by the sea. Is my brother Brian near at hand?

ATTENDANT.—Yea, he did but now enter the grounds, beyond thy house.

KING.—Bid him enter. I would speak with him. [*Attendant retires and BRIAN enters.*]

BRIAN.—Fair and softly, noble Dermot. Thou seemest in a fever of excitement. Calm thyself. Hath the old Priest called upon thee to-day?

DERMOT.—A murrain take the old Priest and his mummeries. I hate the lot of them. But I would not speak to thee of such things, Brian. Tell me the truth, or despite thy kinship to me, thou shalt rue it, if thou holdest back aught. There is something of great moment in the land. Thou durst not hold it back from me. Speak man!

BRIAN.—It is naught. We but had a brush with the men of Leath, and drove them back to the borders. Think not of it. The like happeneth continually, in the unsettled state of our times.

MCMURROUGH [*much excited*].—Ha! Sir, would ye to battle without speaking of it to me. Villains all. My own brother is against me!

BRIAN.—Dermot, consider thyself, whether thou art in condition to lead men to battle. We kept it from thee for thy own good. The enemy is driven out, and their leader slain.

MCMURROUGH.—What, Teague of Leath slain. Brian lie not to me.

BRYAN.—I lie not. Teague is now dead, since thou must know all the tidings.

McMURROUGH [*greatly excited*].—Ha, the demons fly away with him. Brian, thou hast nobly fought. I thank thee. Thou didst lead the people to be sure. No one else but a McMurrough would have conquered and slain the valiant Teague. Speak, then, didst lead the people, and bear the old sword of the Kings of Ireland?

BRIAN.—Thou art too greatly excited for thy good. Rest in peace until the morrow. Thou hast the important news and nothing further of moment remaineth to be told to thee.

McMURROUGH.—Thou hast not answered me. Thou evadest the question. Brian, didst thou command the people?

BRIAN.—Since thou must have answer, and will not rest otherwise, I did not. Now go to thy rest, and at some time when thou art better able to hear, I will give thee a history of the battle.

McMURROUGH.—Sir, I will know who led the people and slew the great Teague. Was it McNagrish?

BRIAN.—Nay! Canst thou not consider thy own condition. Thou art wrought up to the remotest pitch. Let me go. Farewell.

McMURROUGH.—Stay. I am Dermot McMurrough. I am King of Ireland, and all power is in my hands. I command thee to speak and tell me who commanded the people. [*Enter old Priest.*] Ah! Brian! it was the old Priest? Tell me!

BRIAN.—It was not. Why art thou so violent? It was not the Priest.

McMURROUGH.—I command thee then to speak, or fear my displeasure.

BRIAN.—I will tell thee, then wilt thou go to rest. It was Armagh! [*McMURROUGH gasps for breath, tries to speak, throws up his hands and falls back dead.* BRIAN and PRIEST raise him, but, seeing him dead, lay him down and covered him.]

SCENE 5TH.—[*ARMAGH walking alone in the forest. Talking to himself.*]

ARMAGH.—It must not be. Down false ambition, I will join the good old Priest, and spend the remainder of my life, leading my countrymen into the paths of peace and rectitude, I will go first to Britain, and tell the gentle Ethelred and his no-

ble sister, how the loved Edgar came to his death. O woe is me ! I loved the generous youth as my son. [*He weeps.*] No ! I must not be King of this people. Brian hath the natural right, and he will be a good and a wise king, for he already hearkeneth to the wise counsels of the good Priest. [*Enter BRIAN, McNAGRISH, REDBEARD now one of the King's men, and others.*]

BRIAN.—Noble sir, we seek you to place upon you the mantle of the King of Ireland. The people desire it, and as the natural successor to the kingdom, I freely relinquish all right in thy favour. Armagh, bid us proclaim thee King of Ireland. [*Enter old Priest.*]

ARMAGH.—It cannot be. My course is already before me. Brian, thou art the proper man to succeed thy brother. I cannot. I go with the Priest who stands beside me. It shall be our duty to lead the people from darkness they now are in, and into the light of truth and virtue. Henceforth Armagh lives not for his own glory, but that the world may be better for his having lived in it. McNagrish do thou and those with thee now place the royal robe upon Brian. [*They place the royal robe upon BRIAN, old PRIEST spreads his hands over him, all kneel to BRIAN, slow music outside, curtain falls.*]

END OF DERMOT MCMURROUGH.



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